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ABSTRACT

Establishing and maintaining an orderly classroom is a primary determinant of teaching success. This booklet presents an approach to school discipline that blends the best features of existing successful programs and current research findings. The publication, written in story form, tells of two beginning teachers who realize that their success depends on quickly establishing good classroom discipline. The story centers around their search for the secrets of successful discipline, which leads them to a middle school principal who 7 years earlier had been hired to turn around a school that was reputed to have students who neither achieved nor behaved. The story describes a system called "Win-Win Discipline" that transformed the school into one recognized for its exemplary academic achievement and discipline. Through interviews with the principal and classroom teachers the five basic steps for establishing and maintaining effective discipline are described: (1) developing a discipline plan, (2) establishing classroom rules, (3) determining consequences for violating rules, (4) recognizing and celebrating good behavior, and (5) involving parents in their children's behavior. The story concludes with a discussion of how to implement "Win-Win Discipline." (LL)

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Win-Win Discipline

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by
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and
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Introduction

Classroom discipline is crucial to effective teaching. A teacher must be able to manage student behavior in order to teach. Establishing and maintaining an orderly classroom is a primary determinant of teaching success.

In this fastback, we present an approach to school discipline that blends the best features of existing successful programs, current research findings, and our own experience as teachers and administrators. It represents a straightforward discipline plan, which we believe is applicable in its entirety, or in part, to any school where teachers and administrators are concerned about managing student behavior effectively. We call it Win-Win Discipline.

We have written this fastback as a story involving two beginning teachers who realize that their success depends on quickly establishing good classroom discipline. The story is their search for how to make it happen. In their search they learn about the the five key steps for establishing and maintaining effective discipline: 1) developing a discipline plan, 2) establishing classroom rules, 3) determining consequences for violating rules, 4) recognizing and celebrating good behavior, and 5) involving parents in their children's behavior. We hope you will find the ideas presented here helpful.

Searching for the Secrets of Successful Discipline

Phil and Janice, both graduates of the same university, are first-year teachers in the same school system. Phil teaches social studies in the high school, and Janice teaches fourth grade. Although they were classmates and had taken some of their teacher education courses together, they were too busy during their first semester of teaching to keep in touch.

Phil and Janice ran into each other at a social function for beginning teachers, sponsored by the local Phi Delta Kappa chapter. The purpose of the function was to bring first-year teachers together so they could share experiences and help each other.

Happy to see each other, Phil and Janice struck up a conversation, sharing their first semester's teaching experiences. Even though their first year of teaching was going reasonably well, the conversation soon turned to ways for improving classroom discipline. They agreed that effective discipline seemed to be a secret that some teachers possessed and others didn't. And they realized that orderly learning environments didn't just happen. They had to be created!

Right then and there, Phil and Janice made a decision: they would read everything they could find about establishing and maintaining good classroom discipline. They also would talk to veteran teachers about discipline. And most important, they agreed to communicate on a regular basis to share what they had learned.

Phil and Janice read extensively and visited many teachers during the months that followed. They made careful notes and shared what

they learned. The more they read and the more they visited with experienced teachers, the clearer the message became: the secret of successful classroom discipline is dealing with students who have different abilities, concerns, and needs. Or as Phil put it, "The more effectively I can deal with my students, the more successful I will be as a teacher."

Phil and Janice thought they had the answer for dealing with classroom discipline; but when they tried to put it into practice, they found it didn't work as well as they had anticipated. Discovering what worked for other teachers in other classrooms was one thing; making it work on their own was another. When they tried the "nice guy" approach, the students seemed to take advantage of the situation. When they tried to be hard-nosed, the result was student animosity and resentment. "Surely," said Janice, "there has to be a way to establish and maintain discipline that will work for us."

Discouraged but undaunted, Phil and Janice remained convinced that establishing an orderly classroom environment in which students respected the teacher and each other was within their grasp. Both believed firmly that no student should be allowed to interfere with the learning of another.

A little later Phil came across a feature story in the Sunday paper about a middle school principal from a nearby district who was recently honored by the U.S. Department of Education, which had designated her school as one of the nation's "Blue Ribbon Schools." The principal had just returned from Washington, D.C., where she had accepted the award for her school. She had been hired seven years ago to turn around a middle school that had a reputation of having students who neither achieved nor behaved. The story described a system called "Win-Win Discipline" that the principal used to transform the school into one recognized for its exemplary academic achievement and discipline.

As he read the story, Phil thought, "This principal seems to be just the person we've been looking for. Maybe she might be willing to

share some of her discipline secrets." Phil called Janice to tell her about the principal. They agreed they would try to arrange an appointment with her.

A few days later, Phil called the principal. She was in a meeting, so he told the secretary what he had read about the school's outstanding discipline program and asked if it would be possible for him and a colleague to make an appointment to learn more about the program. "Why of course!" replied the secretary. "She loves to share her knowledge and experience. When would you like to see her?"

"Would Friday morning at 9:00 be possible?" asked Phil. "Our school district has a policy that allows teachers periodically to attend conferences or to observe outstanding programs."

"That's great," said the secretary. "We'll look forward to seeing you Friday. I will set up the appointment with Dr. Brown and also ask her to arrange for classroom visits with some of our veteran teachers."

Meeting the Win-Win Principal

Arriving at the office on Friday morning, Phil and Janice were greeted warmly by the school secretary. They were impressed by her friendliness. "Dr. Brown is expecting you. Please allow me to introduce you." Dr. Brown rose from her desk as the secretary introduced the visitors. "It's a pleasure to meet you," she said. "We enjoy having people visit us. We're proud of how well our students are doing. I have arranged for you to visit several of our classrooms; but before you do that, what can I tell you about our discipline program?"

Phil explained that in their short experience as teachers he and Janice had learned that successful teaching requires being able to establish and maintain good classroom discipline. No matter how much a teacher knew about the subject, little learning would take place if the teacher couldn't control students' behavior.

"I couldn't agree with you more," Dr. Brown said. "In fact, even the general public considers inadequate classroom discipline to be a major problem. As you may know, for the past 20 years classroom discipline has been identified in the annual Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup Polls of the Public's Attitudes Toward Education as one of the top problems teachers face."

Phil went on to explain that he and Janice had read several books and articles and had talked to numerous experienced teachers about classroom discipline but were disappointed with the results when they began practicing what they read and discussed.

"That doesn't surprise me," said Dr. Brown.

Janice continued: "We were particularly interested in the newspaper article that reported how you were able to bring order to a school that many teachers and parents thought was out of control. You were referred to as a 'master of control'. We want to be masters of control, too. That's why we're here."

"Hmm," said Dr. Brown, "I better have a talk with the reporter who wrote that article. I'm sure he meant it as a compliment, but referring to me as a 'master of control' tells me that he really doesn't understand what good discipline is all about."

Dr. Brown continued: "The first thing you need to realize is that establishing and maintaining good student discipline is much more than what a teacher does in a specific classroom. It is the total school culture, everything that happens in a school, that sets the tone and has a significant influence on student behavior. Students learn best in an orderly environment, one in which there are high standards and clear expectations for both students and staff.

"In order to achieve a positive school culture, the principal, teachers, and parents must present a united front on discipline matters. By working together, they can improve discipline through targeting problem areas and agreeing on how to address them. After doing this, they can then develop a school disciplinary code, which is fair, consistent, and firmly enforced.

"The code should clearly spell out the consequences to students who fail to follow school rules. And it also should include provisions for rewarding good behavior. The code should be published and then distributed so that all students know what behavior is expected of them and what the consequences are for violating the code.

"By developing such a code, we were able to overcome discipline problems that had become very serious. The chaotic and unruly conditions at the time I took over as principal subsided and eventually disappeared after we – the staff, parents, students, and I – made a commitment to create an orderly school environment. Slowly but

steadily we built a school culture that celebrated high student academic achievement and good student conduct."

"Pardon me, Dr. Brown," said Phil, "but I'm not sure I understand the relationship between a schoolwide discipline code and good classroom discipline." Janice nodded in agreement.

Dr. Brown continued: "The classroom is the command center where teachers win or lose the battle for order. If disruptive behavior prevails and discipline is weak or absent, the chances for academic achievement are slim. Teachers in their individual classrooms can reduce disruptive behavior and increase scholastic success by setting and enforcing rules at the beginning of the school year, by consistently rewarding good behavior, and by promptly punishing misconduct. However, you can't rely on only the efforts of individual teachers in the classroom To develop an orderly environment throughout the school, it is imperative that classroom rules and the consequences for breaking them are in harmony with the schoolwide discipline code."

Pausing to make sure that Phil and Janice understood her point, Dr. Brown continued: "When the superintendent asked me to become principal of this middle school, I knew that it meant taking on a difficult assignment. Three months before assuming the position, I interviewed several principals here in Mississippi, who, by reputation, I knew were particularly effective in dealing with discipline. From them I learned that teachers who were warm and caring could also be effective disciplinarians. Because they cared and wanted their students to succeed, they established clear rules and consequences for breaking them. The rules and consequences were communicated to both students and parents. The students were expected to follow the rules and were rewarded for doing so. In my own experience, I have found that effective teachers use positive reinforcement to motivate their students. They are generous in their praise, and students are rewarded for being good."

"But how can we put what you are saying to work in our classrooms?" asked Janice. "Do you have some kind of manual we can borrow?"

"You don't need a manual," replied Dr. Brown. "Win-Win Discipline consists of just five basic steps. But rather than my telling you what those steps are, see what you can learn about them on your visits to our classrooms."

Dr. Brown then looked at the master schedule on her wall and wrote out a list of teachers' names, planning periods, and room numbers. "These teachers are expecting you. When you drop in, tell them you want to learn about our student discipline program. They will be glad to explain it to you. After your visits, come back to my office so we can discuss what you have learned."

The Five Steps of Win-Win Discipline

Step One: Make a Plan

Phil and Janice's first appointment was with Joan Widmar, an energetic language arts and social studies teacher with many years of experience. As Phil and Janice entered her classroom, they could see it radiated warmth. It was neat and colorful, with examples of students' work on the walls.

Joan Widmar greeted her visitors saying, "Dr. Brown told me to expect some visitors today. I'm Joan Widmar. It's a pleasure to meet you."

After introducing themselves, Janice began the discussion. "Dr. Brown told us that we could best learn about the five basic steps of the Win-Win Discipline program in your school by talking to those who are implementing it. And she suggested we start with you. Can you help us?"

"Yes, I'd be glad to," said Widmar. "I've taught at this school for 10 years, and the difference in student conduct since Dr. Brown became principal is like night and day. This school went from one of the worst in the district to one of the best for student academic achievement and behavior. It all started with step one."

"What is step one?" asked Phil.

"There's an important lesson to be learned about classroom discipline in Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland*," said Widmar. "Perhaps you remember the passage where Alice says to the Cheshire Cat:

"Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to go from here?" asked Alice.

"That depends a good deal on where you want to go to," answered the Cat.

"I don't much care where," said Alice.

"Then it doesn't matter which way you go," said the Cat.

Janice got the point immediately. "If the Cheshire Cat presented a workshop on student discipline for teachers, he might tell them that the first step in establishing classroom discipline is deciding where you want to go; and that involves a little planning."

"Right," replied Widmar. "Developing a systematic plan is the first step in the Win-Win Discipline process. Teachers who fail to plan really plan to fail."

Widmar continued: "The plan should have a brief set of rules that explain clearly what behavior is expected, what is acceptable, and exactly what will happen when students choose to misbehave. By informing students about the consequences for inappropriate behavior, they realize they are responsible for how they will behave.

"Without a plan, teachers are inconsistent. One day they may discipline students for talking too loudly during seatwork time; another day they may ignore the same behavior by other students. In fact, teachers who fail to adhere to a plan may be accused of letting racial, ethnic, or socioeconomic backgrounds of students influence their discipline decisions."

"Do all the teachers in this school have the same discipline plan, or do they differ from teacher to teacher?" asked Phil.

"To some degree they differ," said Widmar. "To be effective, a classroom discipline plan must reflect a particular teacher's philosophy, personality, and teaching style. It must, however, be consistent with schoolwide behavior standards."

"Then would it be fair to say that teachers can select what works for them as long as it is in harmony with the school's code?" asked Phil.

"Exactly," replied Widmar. "In Win-Win Discipline, once a teacher develops a draft of her specific discipline plan, she has a conference with Dr. Brown to review and discuss it. After it is approved, the teacher produces a final copy of the plan by the end of the first week of school. The plan should include rules and consequences, which the teacher has discussed with the students during the first week of school and which they have agreed to follow.

"Win-Win Discipline takes into account the schoolwide behavior standards, such as demonstrating respect for the environment by keeping the campus clean, as well as the classroom rules set by the teacher. Upholding the school's standards and the teacher's standards is the essence of achieving success in establishing and maintaining an orderly environment and positive learning climate."

"From what I have seen so far, your school seems to have achieved that. The campus looks so attractive," commented Janice.

Widmar smiled, pleased by the remark.

Phil looked at Janice and saw that she was jotting down some notes on her pad. She wrote:

To establish Win-Win Discipline you must:

1. Develop a discipline plan at the start of the school year.
2. Address rules and consequences in the plan.
3. Ensure the classroom plan is in harmony with schoolwide behavior standards.
4. Review and discuss your plan with the principal.

Step Two: Establishing Rules

No sooner had Janice finished her notes when a tall, trim man in his early thirties entered Joan Widmar's classroom.

"Hi, I'm Ray Majeski. Joan and I team-teach a language arts and social studies core. I'm also your next appointment."

After exchanging introductions, Widmar said, "I've explained step one of our Win-Win Discipline program, and now they're ready to learn about step two. That's your assignment."

"Good," said Majeski. "Step two zeroes in on rules, the nitty-gritty of effective classroom discipline." Then turning to Janice, he asked, "Why do you think we need rules?"

Collecting her thoughts, Janice answered, "I think rules are a way of setting limits. They get across a teacher's expectations."

"Right on!" replied Majeski. "To develop rules, a teacher needs guidelines. Here are five I really like, which happen to be those for our school:

1. Establish classroom rules on the first day of school.
2. Select three to five rules that are critical to you as a teacher. Enlist the students in developing more if desired. Keep the total number of rules to 10 or less.
3. Write rules in clear, positive language that students understand.
4. Keep classroom rules in harmony with schoolwide rules.
5. Post rules where students can see them.

"These guidelines have enabled me to develop rules that my students and I can live with and follow," he concluded.

As Majeski was explaining the guidelines, Janice noticed that Joan Widmar's classroom rules were posted on the wall. There were only five, all carefully lettered and posted where students could see them as they entered and left the classroom. Widmar's rules were:

Classroom Rules
Seventh-Grade Core Students Are Expected To:

1. Be prepared
2. Be prompt
3. Be positive
4. Be responsible
5. Be respectful

Noticing that Janice was looking at the poster, Widmar said, "I call my class rules 'living rules' because we regularly discuss and analyze them. Sometimes we come to a completely new understanding of what each of the rules means, which helps us to change our behavior. You can't just present rules the first week of school and then forget about them."

"I agree," said Majeski. "In the Win-Win Discipline approach, teachers continue to help students understand the purpose and value of following reasonable rules."

"One of our schoolwide goals," added Widmar, "is to teach students self-discipline and responsibility in day-to-day instruction. Personally, I teach discipline rules to my students with the same intensity that I teach a writing or a history lesson."

"So do I," echoed Majeski.

"Because it's important that the teacher be a good role model," Widmar continued, "Ray and I try to show the students exactly what we expect. Values are caught, not taught. Teachers who are courteous, prompt, enthusiastic, and well-organized tend to produce students who exhibit similar characteristics."

Janice was impressed with what she was seeing and hearing. She probed further to learn about specific techniques: "Do you use certain signals or reminders to get students' attention?"

"I'm glad you asked that," Majeski said. "Teacher cues or signals are good techniques to use in maintaining control. Effective teachers have always known that cues or signals serve as nonverbal reminders about behavioral expectations. They are certainly a part of our Win-Win Discipline strategy. Joan and I prefer raising a hand to get attention or pressing an index finger to the lips as a reminder for silence. We also like to give a thumbs down as a signal for inappropriate behavior."

Widmar added, "Some teachers prefer flipping the light switch on and off to get the students' attention. Whatever cues or signals are used, it is important that the student:

1. Know the signal.
2. Know the situation.
3. Know to stop, look, and listen."

Majeski looked at his watch and announced to Phil and Janice that it was almost time for their next appointment. While Phil was thanking Joan Widmar and Ray Majeski for sharing their ideas, Janice was busy writing notes about step two in the Win-Win Discipline program. She wrote:

1. Develop clear, positive rules that students understand.
2. Write and post the rules.
3. Make classroom rules consistent with schoolwide rules.
4. Model appropriate behavior addressed in the rules.
5. Use nonverbal cues or signals to get students' attention.

Step Three: Consequences

The next stop for Phil and Janice was Mary Prim's science classroom. They entered a room full of interesting scientific displays and plant and animal specimens. On some bulletin boards were attractive charts and diagrams designed to teach a scientific concept; on others were samples of students' work.

After introductions were exchanged, Prim said with a smile, "I understand you are here to learn more about our school's Win-Win Discipline program."

"Yes," said Janice, "Dr. Brown told us we could learn more from talking with the faculty than we could from her. So here we are."

Prim began the discussion by asking, "Are you familiar with Lewis Carroll's *Through the Looking Glass*?"

Phil and Janice looked at each other and smiled. Lewis Carroll must be this school's favorite author, they both thought at once.

Prim continued, "In one of my favorite episodes, Alice is protesting to Humpty Dumpty because his words have no consistent meaning, so she can't understand him. Humpty Dumpty replies, 'When I

use a word, it means just what I choose it to mean – nothing more nor less.' Some teachers are like Humpty Dumpty; they are inconsistent when it comes to discipline. They have poor discipline because they have failed to define clearly the consequences for misbehavior."

Phil and Janice both made a mental note to reread Lewis Carroll. They were beginning to see his works in a fresh perspective.

"In Win-Win Discipline," Prim continued, "it is important that consequences for violating rules be consistent and enforced whenever a rule is broken."

"Is 'consequences' another name for punishment?" asked Janice.

"No, I don't see it that way," said Prim. "Punishment is too negative a term. What we want to do is to make students understand that there is a cause-and-effect relationship in the choices they make with regard to their behavior."

"I'm not sure what you mean by 'cause and effect' as it applies to discipline," responded Phil.

"Let me explain it this way," said Prim. "When a student chooses to break a rule, a consequence will follow. It is important that students clearly see the connection between their behavior and the consequence that follows. Once they understand the cause-and-effect relationship when they violate a rule, they realize that the consequence is a result of their decision to behave inappropriately. This is why we stress consequences in our Win-Win Discipline program. We have to be consistent in enforcing the consequences and accept no excuses for misconduct. Of course, consequences should be reasonable and take into account the frequency and severity of the rule violation."

"If I understand what you are telling me," said Janice, "it's important that students realize that they determine the consequence by choosing to misbehave."

"Yes," said Prim. "We believe that by understanding the cause-and-effect relationship, students learn to become responsible persons."

"But how do you actually administer consequences?" asked Phil.

"First, determine in advance what the consequences are for violating school and classroom rules," said Prim. "And make sure students

know what the specific consequences are for specific misbehavior, ranging from serious behavior like fighting to minor offensives like talking loudly during quiet study time.

"Second, give a simple but firm warning to stop the inappropriate behavior. This can be done by moving toward the offending student, making direct eye contact, and speaking softly but in a controlled manner. Never let students exceed the acceptable limits of classroom behavior. Be consistent!

"And third, always record a check mark for misbehavior in your Win-Win Book."

"What is the Win-Win Book?" asked Phil.

Prim continued, "The Win-Win Book is a means of keeping track of unacceptable behavior, which is documented through the use of check marks. The students, of course, know what the check marks mean in terms of consequences. For students in my classes, check marks received during any one-week period mean:

One check: time-out for a specified amount of time in an isolated area in the classroom.

Two checks: time-out duration is doubled.

Three checks: phone call by teacher to parents and detention before or after school.

Four checks: another phone call to parents and detention time doubled.

Five checks: parent conference held to determine a course of action.

"If a student gets more than five check marks in any one-week period, he or she is referred to Dr. Brown."

"Have you referred many students to the principal?" asked Janice.

Mary Prim looked at her Win-Win Book for previous years and answered, "It appears that the last time I referred a student to Dr. Brown was three years ago. During the first couple of years after Dr. Brown took over as principal, there were many student referrals;

but the students soon got the message that the faculty, parents, and principal were working together to create an orderly and productive learning environment."

"Do all the teachers use check marks for keeping track of misbehavior?" Janice asked.

"Some teachers prefer using a letter code instead of check marks. The letters serve as a memory prop when writing notes or making calls to parents. For example, they use C for student chatting or whispering when quiet is expected, D for disruptive behavior such as bothering other students or loud talking, and O for being off-task or doing something other than the assigned work. Some teachers prefer keeping track of both good behavior and misbehavior with a notation in their grade books or on 3 x 5 index cards filed alphabetically in a box. Whatever system a teacher uses, the important thing is to keep accurate records."

"Maybe the Win-Win Book should be called the Win-Lose Book; the faculty wins and students who misbehave lose," joked Phil.

"On the contrary!" exclaimed Prim in a tone that a mother might use on an errant son. "The book also is used to track success. Appropriate behavior, such as helping others, staying on task, or demonstrating extra effort, is documented by making a + sign after a student's name. Let me show you how it works."

Mary Prim's Win-Win Book was a spiral binder with a page for each of her classes and the students' names listed alphabetically down the left side. Ruled columns divided the school year into 36 weeks. As Phil and Janice looked at each page, they could see numerous + signs and positive comments and only a few check marks and negative comments.

Phil continued to look at the book while Janice made some notes on the third step in Win-Win Discipline. She wrote:

1. Determine in advance the consequences for breaking the rules.
2. Apply a consequence whenever a rule is violated.
3. Administer reasonable consequences fairly and consistently.
4. Document both inappropriate and appropriate behavior.

As Janice was finishing her notes, another teacher entered Mary Prim's classroom. He was older than the other teachers Janice and Phil had met. His hair was gray, but there was a look of youthfulness about him.

Prim introduced Bob Bronson to Phil and Janice and explained that he was her teammate in the eighth-grade math-science core program. Bronson taught mathematics and was one of the district's most distinguished teachers, having received numerous awards for teaching excellence. Prim added that he had just turned 63 and was planning to retire at the end of the school year so that he could join the Peace Corps – something Bronson had long wanted to do but couldn't afford to until his youngest daughter had graduated from medical school.

Step Four: Recognizing Good Behavior

"It'll be sad to leave my colleagues at this school," said Bronson, "but I've wanted to join the Peace Corp ever since the program was established. I couldn't afford to do it, until now. But you didn't come here to hear about my retirement plans. I understand you want to learn more about our Win-Win Discipline program?"

"We've learned about the first three steps. I guess we're ready for step four now," said Phil.

"Maybe I can help," said Bronson. "I see you have been looking at Mary's Win-Win Book. Did you notice anything special about the book?"

"Yes," said Janice. "There were many more plus marks than there were check marks for misbehavior."

"That should tell you something. Catching students being good and letting them know you like it by recording it in the book is what Win-Win Discipline is all about," said Bronson. "We focus on accentuating the positive. We want our students to see themselves as winners."

Having played baseball in college, the term "winners" triggered a response from Phil. "You mean Win-Win Discipline is like a game

in which the student tries to score more plus marks for appropriate behavior than check marks for misbehavior?"

"No!" responded Bronson emphatically. "Establishing good discipline is not a game. The problem with games is that they produce losers as well as winners."

"Then I'm not sure what you mean," said Phil.

"Let me try to explain," said the veteran teacher. "Let's use the game of baseball as an example, since you played for State."

Phil was was surprised that Bronson knew he played college baseball and asked him how he knew.

"My oldest grandson plays for Southern, and I had the pleasure of watching you play them a couple of times last year. Your double in the ninth inning of the last game saved the day," explained Bronson. "But getting back to my example. When your team whipped Southern, what do you think their reaction was?"

"I suppose they would want beat us the next time we played them," answered Phil.

"Exactly!" exclaimed Bronson. "A team always wants to win the game; but if they regularly lose to your team, year-in and year-out, they get discouraged and would stop scheduling games with you if they could. No one wants to be the loser all the time."

"You know, that's exactly what happened when I was playing baseball for State," said Phil. "We regularly opened our season by playing a small liberal arts college, and we trounced them every year. After many years of being the loser, that school simply stopped scheduling games with us."

"There is a message here that applies to establishing and maintaining classroom discipline," responded Bronson.

"Yes!" interrupted Janice. "The problem with viewing discipline as a game is that games always have winners and losers. Somebody always has to lose. Classroom discipline is much too important to be seen as a game. Students who see themselves as losers develop low self-esteem and lose confidence. Even worse, they may become confrontational and hostile when they see themselves as losers."

"Precisely!" proclaimed Bronson. "I taught for many years before realizing that a successful discipline program could produce winners. The key to successful discipline is making students winners. No one wants to feel like a loser."

Prim chimed in: "We believe that students want to be successful, responsible, and happy. Every student wants to be liked and respected by others. The teacher should help nurture that. A student comes to appreciate his own worth by doing well in school, which ultimately fosters responsible behavior and personal integrity. Win-Win Discipline is based on the belief that students learn responsible behavior when they have the opportunity to make good choices. By making thoughtful choices, they learn that appropriate actions lead to positive consequences."

Bronson added, "Teachers can help students who misbehave think about their choices by asking them *what* questions rather than *why* questions. For example:

What did you do?
What rules were broken?
What was the result of your behavior?

"In this way teachers show students they care by really listening. By listening rather than just reprimanding, teachers earn students' trust and respect."

Prim continued, "Using I-messages to communicate your feelings also can help students understand how their behavior touches you. An I-message shows you care, while at the same time it tells the students your expectations."

"I'm not quite clear about what an I-message is," said Phil.

"An I-message," responded Prim, "is when the teacher prefaces her remarks with phrases such as 'I want you to. . . ,' 'I need you to. . . ,' or 'I have to. . . when you . . . .' The teacher establishes rapport this way."

"Positive recognition is the key to Win-Win Discipline," said Bronson. "The focus is on rewarding good behavior. That's why Mary's discipline book has so many more plus marks than check marks."

"We celebrate good behavior!" exclaimed Prim.

"How?" asked Phil.

"There are many ways to recognize and celebrate student success," answered Bronson. "Praise is the technique that I use most. To be effective, praise should be sincere and genuine. It can be expressed publicly or privately. I make it a personal rule to praise 10 or more students in each of my classes every day."

"What do you actually say when you're praising students?" asked Janice.

"I use a lot of different expressions, said Bronson. "I say things like 'Fantastic,' 'Super job,' 'That's great,' 'Nice going,' 'Keep up the good behavior,' 'Much better,' 'That's quite an improvement,' 'Thanks for working so hard,' or 'I knew you could do it'."

"In addition to praise," added Prim, "other ways to recognize and celebrate good student behavior are smiles, nods, and pats on the back; special privileges, such as being first in the line or extra library time; special classroom events, such as games, films, or class parties; also success-grams, good-news telephone calls home, and super-citizen bulletin boards."

"These are great ideas," said Janice. "They are just what I have been searching for. But what do I do with the student who can't seem to stay on task or in his chair, one of those who is easily distracted and won't do the work?"

"Some students," answered Bronson, "are helped by having the teacher set realistic goals that lead to a change in behavior. For the student you just described, set a short-term goal. Once achieved, develop a new one until success is reached. Keep records so you can celebrate success."

"What about the student who wants to improve his behavior, but can't seem to get the job done?" asked Phil.

"Good question," said Bronson, "but I think you will get that answered at your next stop."

"Also, don't forget the physical arrangement of the classroom," said Prim. "There are a lot of simple things you can do to encourage appropriate behavior and prevent discipline problems before they occur. For example, establishing classroom traffic patterns and spacing desks far enough apart to prevent crowding are two ways that have proven effective."

"Now," said Bronson, "it's time for you two to learn about step five in Win-Win Discipline."

Before they left, Janice added another entry in her notebook about the fourth step in in Win-Win Discipline. She wrote: To encourage this good behavior, the teacher needs to:

1. Catch students being good.
2. Help students see themselves as winners.
3. Praise and reward good behavior.
4. Provide opportunity for students to make choices.
5. Require students to be responsible for their behavior.

Step Five: Parent Involvement

Bob Bronson walked with Phil and Janice to Jan McKenzie's classroom and introduced them.

"Jan is one of our new math teachers," said Bronson. "She graduated from that other university; you know, the one that wins at football but loses in baseball."

Phil laughed.

Like the other classrooms that Phil and Janice had visited, McKenzie's was neat, orderly, and attractive. The display of student work demonstrated that she took seriously the school's motto: "We catch 'em being good."

After Bronson had excused himself, McKenzie said, "He's my mentor. Because of his guidance, I've had a good beginning at this school."

"Mentor?" queried Janice.

"Yes," said McKenzie. "Our school assigns new teachers a mentor during their first two or three years. This person helps beginning teachers learn the ropes about managing their classrooms – you know, all those things you didn't learn in college."

Phil and Janice looked at each other and thought how helpful it would have been if they had had mentors. McKenzie seemed so confident of her ability to manage a classroom. It was obvious that Bronson had really helped her to implement Win-Win Discipline.

McKenzie continued: "I was flattered when Dr. Brown asked me if I would tell you about my experience with step five of our Win-Win Discipline program, since I am only in my second year of teaching."

"Your principal must think very highly of you," said Phil.

"She has been very supportive," said McKenzie, and then continued: "We call step five the 'parent connection,' and I think it's the reason our discipline program works so well. Discipline programs that encourage parent involvement result in students who are well behaved."

"But," asked Phil, "how do you get your parents interested and involved in their children's behavior?"

"On the advice of Bob Bronson, I started by establishing a communications link between school and home during the very first week of school. I sent home with each of my students a copy of the school's discipline code and a copy of my classroom discipline plan with an explanation of rewards for observing classroom rules and consequences for violating them. Along with these was a brief cover letter asking parents to read the materials and sign a pledge signifying they would work in partnership with me to help their children behave appropriately in school. The student also signed the pledge. After it was returned, I put it in a special binder."

McKenzie showed Phil and Janice her binder containing 106 signed pledges, one for each of her students. The pledge form listed the class rules in bold print followed by the pledge statement and signatures.

McKenzie continued: "If students continue to misbehave after being warned or receiving time-out, I show them the signed pledge. Students soon get the message when they are confronted with a pledge that has their signature on it as well as their parents' signature. This makes a powerful statement."

"How many times in your teaching career have you had to do this?" asked Phil.

"About 25 times during my first year, but only twice this year," answered McKenzie. "I think some students had to test me as a beginning teacher the first year."

"What do you do if the student doesn't get the message when you show him the pledge?" asked Phil.

"I use a more serious consequence and call the parents," replied McKenzie. "Bob Bronson says that parents' support of my discipline plan usually can make the difference in changing their child's behavior for the better."

"By the way," said Phil, "Mr. Bronson told us that you could answer a question I asked him. What about the student who says he wants to improve his behavior but can't quite seem to get the job done? What do you do in that situation?"

"For such situations I received some good advice from Bob Bronson," said McKenzie. "He suggested that I have students keep a daily behavior journal, which is then shared with the parent. A student who wants to change behavior but has difficulty doing so is asked to record his behavior in a journal throughout the school day. At the end of the day, the student takes the journal home and is asked to think about what he did and why he did it. With this kind of self-analysis, he identifies what should be done so he won't misbehave again. The parent is expected to read and initial every journal entry. I then check the journal periodically throughout the week."

"Does the journal also help the student to ask *what* questions?" asked Janice.

"Very much so," answered McKenzie. "Getting the student to talk about what he did, what rules were broken, and what the consequence

of his behavior was is important; but getting him to write about it and reflect on it is even better. Keeping a journal encourages a student to assess his own behavior. It provides a personal account of the student's reaction after making an inappropriate behavior choice. By keeping a journal, students come to see themselves as capable of being responsible for their behavior, for making appropriate choices about how to behave."

McKenzie continued: "When a student's misbehavior requires it, I call the parents. I briefly explain the situation, identify the behavior that needs changing, and ask for their help and cooperation. Together, we determine what action is needed to improve behavior. Then we agree to do it. Through phone calls and notes, I keep the parents informed."

"What if the student continues to misbehave?" asked Janice.

"Then I schedule a conference with the parents," replied McKenzie. "It's important for the student to be present at the conference. Before the conference, I jot down the problem behaviors so that the parents will have something specific to react to when we discuss corrective measures. At the conference, I describe what action has been taken, what the results have been, and what I haven't been able to do in school that needs to be done at home. I ask for advice regarding what the parents feel should be done to solve the problem. Soliciting parental advice brings the parent into a partnership with the teacher. These conferences promote good feelings that nurture the partnership.

"Collaboration is the key to gaining parental support for dealing with problem behavior. Involve parents in setting up some improvement goals and then rank them. Then come up with an agreed-on plan of action in the form of a contract that focuses on a few goals at a time. Contracts differ from pledges in that they address particular concerns. The contract or action plan should:

1. Identify what needs to be done to improve behavior.
2. Determine what the student will do.

3. Determine what the teacher will do to help the student.
4. Determine what the parent will do to assist the teacher.
5. Identify rewards for appropriate behavior and consequences for misbehavior.

"The plan of action should be realistic, short-term, and specific to the behavior discussed. It should be evaluated periodically and revised when needed. Vital to the plan is a commitment from both the parents and the student. Put the plan in writing and have all parties sign it. Follow-up is also important. Let the parents know how well the child is doing through phone calls and notes."

"Wow, it all sounds great," said Phil. "But what do you do if the problem persists and the plan isn't working?"

"If this happens," responded McKenzie, "I accept no excuses. I call the parent and arrange another conference. Together, we find out what went wrong, revise the plan, and renew our commitment."

"What if. . . ," Phil started to say.

"I know," responded McKenzie in a flash. "What if it still doesn't work and the misbehavior continues? Then, I refer the student to the principal. Last year I had a problem like that – a very troubled transfer student. Dr. Brown administered in-school suspension. The student finally got the message that he could choose to be responsible for obeying the rules or choose to be punished. I'm happy to report that the student made a wise choice and is doing well."

"Because of what you have shared with us," said Janice, "I feel much better about what steps to take to solve a discipline problem. Getting the parents involved will be my first step."

"Just remember, there is no quick, simple answer to most discipline problems," said McKenzie. "And getting parents involved is hard work, but it has been successful for me. Also, remember that receiving good news from school is even more important for fostering parent collaboration. I often share with parents the progress a student is making by good-news phone calls or sending success-grams home."

"Do you keep track of your good-news calls or success-grams?" asked Phil.

"Yes," answered McKenzie, "I make a call or send a success-gram based on the plus marks recorded in my Win-Win Book. I keep a log of both kinds of messages, so I know which parents are receiving positive messages. And I do see a correlation between helping students to become responsible for their behavior and celebrating the fact with their parents."

Jan McKenzie's planning period was about over, and Phil and Janice thanked her for telling them about the final step in Win-Win Discipline.

Before leaving, Janice jotted down another entry in her notebook. She wrote: In order to gain parental support for your classroom discipline program, you need to:

1. Build a communication link between the school and the home.
2. Send home an explanation of your behavior standards.
3. Require parents to sign a pledge to work with you.
4. Maintain frequent communication with parents.
5. Involve parents in the discipline process.

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Putting Win-Win to Work

As Phil and Janice walked back Dr. Brown's office, they thought about the five steps of Win-Win Discipline. Each of the five steps for establishing and maintaining an orderly classroom environment made sense, and they looked forward to applying them in their own classrooms. Now they were eager to tell Dr. Brown how much they appreciated learning about the school's discipline program.

When Phil and Janice arrived at Dr. Brown's office, the secretary greeted them and said, "Go right in. Dr. Brown is waiting for you."

After serving them coffee, Dr. Brown began by asking, "Tell me, have you now learned the secrets of our successful discipline program?"

Phil spoke first, "Yes! Designing a plan for an orderly classroom is the first step. The plan should include brief, clear rules and an explanation of the consequences if the student doesn't obey the rules. Without a plan, teachers will not be consistent."

Then noticing a plaque on the wall behind Dr. Brown's desk, Phil added, "It's like the inscription on that plaque:

Teachers Who
Fail To Plan
Plan To Fail

"Good classroom discipline doesn't just happen. There has to be a plan."

"You're absolutely right; planning is crucial to good classroom discipline," said Dr. Brown. "I meet with each teacher at the beginning of the school year, and throughout the year as needed, to help them develop successful classroom management strategies. I encourage teachers to ask themselves such questions as:

What kind of learning climate do I expect in my classroom?
What general rules are necessary for proper student conduct?
What are the consequences for not obeying the rules?
What kind of positive reinforcement will I use?
How do I plan to involve parents?

"In the meeting, we also look at how the teacher's particular classroom plan agrees with the schoolwide behavior standards."

"Step two," said Phil, "made me aware of the importance of classroom rules and why some teachers' rules work well but others do not. For classroom rules to be effective, they should be:

1. Positive and limited in number.
2. Written in clear, brief language that students understand.
3. Posted in a place that students can easily see.
4. Consistent with schoolwide standards.

"Also, students should be involved in developing some of the rules."

Pleased that these two first-year teachers had gained so much insight, Dr. Brown smiled and said to Janice, "Now it's your turn."

Janice laughed and said, "At first I really didn't like step three of the discipline program because the term consequences seemed a little too negative for me, but Mary Prim's Humpty Dumpty story opened my eyes."

Dr. Brown laughed.

Janice continued, "Thanks to Mary Prim, I learned that consequences are not punishment per se. Consequences help students learn that there is a cause-and-effect relationship when rules are violated. When a student breaks a rule, it is important for him to understand that it was his decision to do so."

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"Learning how to administer consequences was very helpful," added Phil. "Making sure that students know in advance what the consequences will be, giving clear warning signals, and keeping records for unacceptable behavior are pointers I needed to know."

Janice pointed to two other plaques on the wall of Dr. Brown's office. "Those two plaques say it all for step four."

The inscription on one of the plaques was:

Students Who Produce Good Results
Feel Good About Themselves

The other plaque said:

Catch 'em Being Good

Janice continued: "Catching students being good and letting them know you value their behavior is what Win-Win Discipline is all about, at least to me."

"You read my mind," said Dr. Brown.

"I like the idea that all students have an opportunity to see themselves as winners," said Phil. "Keeping track of good behavior, recognizing it and celebrating it, especially through praise, are great methods for building self-esteem."

"I especially like the emphasis the faculty places on having students act responsibly toward each other," said Janice. "In that way they come to appreciate their worth and develop character. Win-Win Discipline is much more teaching and learning good conduct than it is enforcing particular behavior."

"I'm glad you see it that way," said Dr. Brown. "What about step five? Do you think it's important?"

"I certainly do," answered Phil. "It's very important to get parents interested and involved."

"I agree," said Janice. "Jan McKenzie does an excellent job in this respect. Establishing a communication link between the school and home is crucial to effective discipline."

"Our Win-Win Discipline program depends highly on parental support," said Dr. Brown. "Because teachers send home the school behavior standards and their own classroom discipline plan at the beginning of the school year, parents know before a discipline problem arises what the behavior standards are and what the consequences will be when a student chooses to misbehave. There should be no surprises when teachers contact parents concerning their children."

"What are these school behavior standards to which you just referred?" asked Phil.

"Let me show you," said Dr. Brown as she handed each of them a copy of a booklet. On the cover was the school's name, logo, and the title: *Student Behavior Standards*. The text in the 26-page booklet was clear, concise, and easy to read.

Dr. Brown explained, "The content is based on school board policy and covers everything from school attendance to expulsion. The behavior standards address bus conduct, dress and grooming, truancy and tardiness, student obedience, appropriate language, property, use of tobacco, alcohol, and illegal drugs, fighting and threats, assault, weapons and dangerous devices, and theft. The suspension and expulsion sections also cover due process."

As Phil and Janice skimmed the booklet, they saw that it was divided into nine sections:

1. Introduction (explaining the purpose of behavior standards)
2. Student conduct code
3. Student rights
4. Student responsibilities
5. Behavior standards
6. Interrogations and searches
7. Detention
8. Suspension
9. Expulsion

Each standard was presented on a separate page along with a description of the consequences for violating the standard. An example of one standard is presented below.

Appropriate Language

Student behavior standard: Students are expected to use appropriate language at school and at school-sponsored activities.

What this standard means: Inappropriate language will not be tolerated. Swearing or cursing at another individual is not permitted. Profanity, vulgar language, or verbal disrespect at school or school-sponsored activities is prohibited.

Rule: Students shall use appropriate language.

Consequences: If this rule is broken in the classroom or on campus, the teacher will take action according to the classroom discipline plan. If this rule continues to be broken, the student will be referred to the principal and required to attend a school-parent conference where it will be made clear that repeated violations will result in suspension or recommendation for expulsion.

Dr. Brown continued: "We think that a school should be more than just a building. Our school is a learning community. Our students, parents, and staff are an extended family, one in which everybody is a contributing member. In order for the members to work together and be productive, there must be some rules and they must be obeyed.

"Every student has the right to a safe and orderly learning environment that is free from disruption. In schools with effective discipline, students learn how to behave. But behavior standards cannot be taught haphazardly. There must be a consistent plan that all teachers follow and enforce schoolwide. Our Win-Win Discipline is the plan that works for us."

As Dr. Brown rose from her desk signaling the end of the conference, she said, "In the final analysis, the heart of any successful discipline plan is effective teaching; and that calls for good 'stuffers'."

"Stuffers?" asked Phil. "What do you mean?"

Dr. Brown laughed, pointing to a large, colorful poster on the wall that her faculty had made and presented to her. Glued to the poster was an empty box of stuffing mix. The text read as follows:

> To Dr. Linda Brown, Principal
> Our leader in establishing and maintaining
> a safe and orderly school environment
>
> Presented in sincere appreciation
> by the faculty and staff
>
> Some schools are effective, others are not.
> Effective schools require teachers who:
>
> Know their stuff,
> Know the students they stuff,
> Know how to stuff well.
>
> Like their stuff,
> Like the students they stuff,
> Like to stuff well.
>
> We are that kind of faculty and staff.
> We are good stuffers!

After reading the poster, Phil and Janice agreed that good teachers are good "stuffers" and that good discipline depends on good teaching. They then thanked Dr. Brown for making the arrangements to talk with the faculty.

As they left the building and walked toward the parking lot, Janice said, "You know, Phil, I think we now know the secret of establishing and maintaining an orderly classroom environment."

"Yes," said Phil. "I'm ready to try it. How about you?"

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